

FIERY PAPER ON CITY'S HEALTH

(Continued from First Page.)

Investigate the Health Department, submit the following report:

Your committee being fully impressed with the gravity of the work assigned to it, deemed it advisable that a complete record should be kept of all its proceedings, and to that end employed a stenographer, whose transcript is herewith submitted as a part of the report.

This transcript is voluminous record, covering many pages, and contains conclusive evidence of the pressing need in the administration of the Health Department for financial support and a broader conception by the officers of their functions.

Your committee regrets that it cannot put a complete copy of this report in the hands of each member of the Council, but lack of means to have such copies made prevented this.

At the sessions of your committee in the course of the investigation the members of the Board of Health were present by invitation, and their opinions and cooperation earnestly sought, for the double purpose of obtaining all the information possible on the subject matter, and of having done any injustice to the members of the board in ex parte conclusions.

After very careful and conscientious deliberation, your committee submits the following findings:

(a) ORGANIZATION AND ORDINANCES. 1. Our investigation shows that the organization of the Board of Health was established for conditions obtaining many years ago, when Richmond was yet had not reached its present size and importance, and before medical discoveries had been made in the knowledge of the causes of disease, and before adequate methods and means had been developed to prevent it.

2. The science and practice of sanitation and hygiene is a distinct branch of learning from that possessed by the general practitioner of medicine, and should be so recognized in the efforts of a community in its warfare against disease.

3. The Health Department of Richmond is practically a non-existent entity, being made up of the Committee on Health, from the City Council, and of the Board of Health.

4. The Committee on Health changes every two years; its members are not expected to be trained in sanitation, and hence this body is dependent on the Board of Health for advice and recommendations.

5. The Board of Health has its powers limited by being unable to take final action, this power being vested in the Council after reference to the Committee on Health.

6. The president of the Board of Health is the executive officer of the board, and the other two members are merely in an advisory capacity.

7. All three members of the Board of Health are general practitioners of medicine, and their compensation from the city is so small as to make their duties on the board secondary to their private work.

8. No member of the Board of Health has received such training as is nowadays considered necessary for a public health officer, and as just stated, being unable to devote his entire time to sanitation, he cannot keep up with the rapid advances in this science. The president of the board, elected that over if the city should give him enough money to justify him in devoting his entire time to the city, it would not be worth his while to do so, because he could not go off now and properly equip himself in the study of these laws which are recognized as a part of a man's education in this class of work.

9. The sanitary officers or inspectors attached to this department are entirely inadequate in number and efficiency to perform the purposes of their office. They have had neither the training nor the instruction to tell what constitutes a sanitary condition, and as a result, the street cleaning department, as the president stated, "there were four sanitary officers. One died and his place was never filled; we have only three, one is a clerk, one is a janitor, and one is a good, worthy man, but old, broken-down policeman, past the age, probably, of absorbing new information. Moreover, the clerk (of the board) is sick, and, unfortunately, during the last year he has been sick a great deal, so that he has been unable to perform his duties. Your committee, therefore, has to be there to transfer certificates as he is unable to do so, because he could not go off now and properly equip himself in the study of these laws which are recognized as a part of a man's education in this class of work."

10. The clerk of the Board of Health is registrar of vital statistics, bookkeeper for the Health Department and also for the Street Cleaning Department. Apparently, he is expected to do more work than it is possible for him to do efficiently.

11. The ordinances of the Health Department have apparently been developed in a haphazard way, and with a lack of that systematic plan which is required to make a department good at the start, and to keep it that way.

12. Such ordinances as are in existence are not properly collected and compiled for reference. The president stated that he was "not sufficiently conversant with all the laws (relating to the Health Department) to state just where they stand," but he thinks, "the only place where you can get them complete is with Mr. Arthur, the clerk of the Council."

(b) DEPARTMENT OF VITAL STATISTICS. 1. The data for the compilation of the statistics are gotten from the birth certificates, the death certificates, and the death certificates of physicians.

2. Birth returns are so deficient as to show in 1934 (the year examined especially) a population of 100,000, an increase in population of Richmond by an excess of 1,240 deaths over the number of births. (Births reported, 636; deaths, 1,240.) Your committee, therefore, concludes that, in the case of the birth and midwives is, of course, the explanation of this.

3. While there is presumably no death in the hospital number of deaths in certificates (since no burial is permitted without one), the information contained in these certificates is very deficient.

4. Your committee, therefore, concludes that, in the case of the birth and midwives is, of course, the explanation of this.

(c) DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH. 1. To prevent the concealing of death from criminal causes.

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